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Viewing cable 07MANAGUA444, BOLANOS TO SECRETARY LEAVITT - DEMOCRACY IS NOT

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Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#07MANAGUA444**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
07MANAGUA444	2007-02-20 13:12	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Managua

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758456.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758467.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758468.aspx>
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<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-23/Mundo/Relacionados/Mundo2758764.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-23/Mundo/NotaPrincipal/Mundo2758753.aspx>
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<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2757239.aspx>
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<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/Relacionados/Mundo2746673.aspx>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3991/dra-yadira-centeno-desmiente-cable-diplomatico-eeuu>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3968/pellas-pronostico-a-eeuu-victoria-de-ortega-en-2006>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3967/barreto-era-ldquo-fuente-confiable-rdquo-para-eeuu>

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RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 0955
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAGUA 000444

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HHS FOR SECRETARY LEAVITT
MCA FOR AMBASSADOR DANILOVICH
DEPT FOR WHA A/S SHANNON AND WHA/CEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/13/2017
TAGS: [EAID](#) [ECON](#) [EFIN](#) [KDEM](#) [NU](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#)
SUBJECT: BOLANOS TO SECRETARY LEAVITT - DEMOCRACY IS NOT EASY

Classified By: Ambassador Paul A. Trivelli. Reasons 1.4 (B,D).

[¶1.](#) (C) SUMMARY: On January 10, the U.S. Presidential Delegation (Presdel), led by Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Michael Leavitt, discussed with outgoing President

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Enrique Bolanos his plans for a virtual presidential library, his future role in the National Assembly and his perspective on Daniel Ortega's presidency. Bolanos shared details from a recent four-hour-long meeting with Ortega. He also remarked on the importance of the Millennium Challenge Corporation project to Nicaragua. END SUMMARY

Democracy is not easy, nor is serving as President

[¶2.](#) (C) After inquiring about the health of Bolanos' son Javier (who is receiving treatment for cancer in the United States) Secretary Leavitt began the conversation by remarking that this was an historic day for Nicaragua. Bolanos responded that Daniel Ortega's inauguration may be a step backwards for Nicaragua and that "democracy is not easy." Secretary Leavitt asked Bolanos what he had learned during

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his tenure as president. Bolanos commented that nothing about being president "was easy," that he had found "nothing rewarding" about his tenure and, he lamented he had to give up his private life for a "mostly ungrateful" public.

[¶3.](#) (C) Bolanos relayed his future plans to create an "electronic" presidential library accessible via the Internet. He is seeking funding sources and university support for the project. Secretary Leavitt, in turn, shared his experiences with creating a library of the official documents from his term as Governor of Utah and promised to put Bolanos in touch with universities in the United States that might support his effort. The President indicated that "as soon as he is a free man," he intends to visit former President George H.W. Bush and to tour his Presidential Library, at Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas. Bolanos also mentioned the books that he is writing -- a history of the Nicaraguan presidency, an account of the political attempts by Daniel Ortega and Arnaldo Aleman to unseat him, and a detailed account of the political maneuverings in Nicaragua that resulted in the passage of the

Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) by the National Assembly. The President claimed he is working on 12 books simultaneously and that he rises every morning at four o'clock to write. Bolanos added that he wholeheartedly supports a Freedom of Information Act, and that even though the National Assembly refuses to approve the bill, he will make all his presidential papers available to the public.

Uncertain future

14. (C) Bolanos speculated on the future political situation and emphasized that Ortega and Aleman will control all four branches of the Nicaraguan Government (the Executive, the Judiciary, the Legislative and the Electoral Authority), a situation that is "tantamount to a dictatorship." The President said, in his view, the essence of democracy is the diffusion of decision-making; "That's over" in Nicaragua, he said. For Bolanos, the Pact is as strong as ever, and the National Assembly's passage of the Ley Organica (Ways and Means Law) by overruling a presidential veto is another sign of the "marriage between Ortega and Aleman." He believes National Assembly Deputies voted for the Ley Organica because they were offered a "bribe" -- included in the legislation was an item that allows all Deputies and their replacements to import two vehicles, free of tax. (Note: Aleman actually sent a letter to Bolanos to argue that as a National Assembly Deputy -- regardless of his legal status -- he is entitled to the same benefit. The President refused to reply. End Note.) Bolanos believes Ortega needs Aleman to help retain control. With the Pact still strong, Bolanos doubts local mayors or other officials will have any autonomy. Sadly, Bolanos remarked, "most Nicaraguan politicians are ruled by money, not values."

15. (C) Secretary Leavitt responded to Bolanos' remark by stating that every legislative body needs a conscience and that Bolanos could serve that role. Bolanos said he plans to attend National Assembly sessions "every once and a while"

for key votes, though he doubts his influence, since he would be "only one voice out of 92." "If they need my vote, I will be available," he said. He also remarked a recent rule would require Deputies to attend the majority of sessions, which would make his plan impossible.

16. (C) The Secretary commented that the situation Bolanos described is a "difficult recipe" for the country. He praised Bolanos for his contributions and urged him to continue to serve the people of Nicaragua. Bolanos replied that democracy is a process -- "countries are never completely built; we need to continue building." He added that, unfortunately, the Nicaraguan people are scared, and investors are concerned about the new Government. The President added, "Ortega had the benefit of the doubt; now people will doubt the benefit." Outgoing Health Minister Margarita Gurdian commented that 60 percent of the Nicaraguan people did not vote for Daniel Ortega and that the municipal elections in 2008 could provide an opportunity to change the current situation.

"I wish I knew Ortega's heart"

17. (C) Bolanos commented that Ortega does not understand how to be an administrator and that his Olof Palme decision is a clear example of his failings. (Note: Ortega declared that he would not use the current presidency building; instead he will move his offices into the old convention center -- Olof Palme. He contracted for repairs of the building without following any of the Government procurement regulations. End Note.) Bolanos said he had discussed the issue with Ortega during a four-hour meeting the previous week. They also discussed CAFTA at length, and Bolanos commented that, at the end of the discussion, Ortega reluctantly admitted that CAFTA should be protected.

18. (C) In response, the Secretary asked if Ortega's "heart

had changed." Bolanos replied that he wished he "knew Ortega's heart." He added Ortega is not necessarily the problem, rather the "anarchists" that surround him, and mentioned by way of example Sandinista ideologues Orlando Nunez (the new Coordinator for the Council for Food Security and Food Sovereignty) and Ruth Selma Herrera (the new head of Water and Sewage Services, ENACAL). Bolanos believes that if Ortega had more moderate advisors, he "might change."

¶9. (C) Bolanos concluded by saying that "we need to build on what we have," and emphasized the importance of the MCC project to Nicaragua. He also mentioned the success of a project he had supported during his presidency -- the construction of a road to Kukra Hill on the impoverished Atlantic Coast. Before the project, the area had been virtually inaccessible by land. After road construction was completed, the prices of consumables fell by 50 percent, which immediately provided economic relief to the residents. Ambassador Trivelli assured Bolanos the United States will not abandon Nicaragua and will continue to work with democratic partners. He emphasized the U.S. Government is fully aware of his concerns and potential problems with the new administration. MCC Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Ambassador John Danilovich added his thanks for Bolanos' leadership, which made the MCC compact with Nicaragua possible.

¶10. (U) Participants:

Nicaragua:
President Enrique Bolanos Geyer
Chief of Staff Leonardo "Nayo" Somarriba
Senior Political Adviser Frank Arana
Health Minister Margarita Gurdian

U.S.:
Secretary Michael Leavitt

SIPDIS
MCC CEO John Danilovich
Assistant Secretary Tom Shannon
Ambassador Paul Trivelli
DCM Peter Brennan
HHS Special Assistant to the Secretary William Steiger
Political Officer/notetaker Nicole Chulick

¶11. (U) This cable was cleared by Secretary Leavitt and MCC CEO Danilovich.
TRIVELLI